

Parliament Packaging Triads

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Research Objectives and Methodology

This research represents a qualitative exploration for Parliament Blue packaging. The objectives were to gauge consumer perceptions of various packaging alternatives and to provide directional input for further development of new packaging for Parliament Blue.

To meet these objectives, a series of thirteen (13) triads (3 respondents each) were conducted in Elmsford, New York on October 18-19, 1995, as follows:

- Five (5) triads among 18-24 year old Parliament smokers
 - 2 among male king size smokers
 - 1 among female king size smokers
 - 2 among female 100's smokers
- Three (3) triads among 25-34 year old Parliament smokers
 - 1 among male king size smokers
 - 1 among female king size smokers
 - 1 among female 100's smokers
- Five (5) triads among 21-29 year old Competitive Lights smokers
 - 2 among male king size smokers
 - 1 among female king size smokers
 - 1 among male 100's smokers
 - 1 among female 100's smokers

Specific issues addressed included: (a) current imagery of Parliament (b) packaging review (c) package design exploratory.

Caveat

This research is meant to be directional, to provide guidance and insights. It is not to be considered to be definitive nor projectable.

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Key Findings

Imagery

- The primary unaided associations with Parliament are Blue and Light.
- The advertising conveys a relaxing, fantasy, vacation message that is consistent with their vision of the Parliament smoker as a young adult, affluent, male or female who drives a Lexus or BMW.

Packaging

- Of the sixteen new packaging designs explored for Parliament Blue, there appear to be six options worth pursuing. Three are from the traditional set -- S, X and Y. Three are from the "funky" set - G, H and R. All seem to fit with the Parliament imagery and maintain the upscale relaxing theme associated with the advertising.

- S, X, Y

Within the traditional designs, these three elicit the most favorable opinion among Parliament smokers. They are the lightest in color and seem to best convey the lightness of the smoking experience.

- R

It is the option that elicits the most consistent positive reactions among all segments of the franchise. The silver color enhances the aesthetic appeal and quality imagery of the brand, and the blue shading in the upper triangle is particularly pleasing.

- G and H

These revolutionary designs are well received. They emerge as favorites of the Parliament smoker and are the only designs to spark interest in the competitive smoker.

The lighter color of G makes it more appealing to the franchise, as it keeps the image consistent with the "light" cigarette they smoke and enjoy. The darker option H is more a favorite of the competitive segment, as the darker color moves the cigarette towards the richer, stronger tasting light cigarette they prefer.

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· Other packaging elements:

- The crown adds to perceptions of quality. The red dot is often referred to as the "jewel in the crown" and makes the crest, itself, more impactful.
- For the franchise, the elements that suggest "light" appear to work better at connoting the lightness of the cigarette and the advertising. This includes the thinner white line, floating gold border (vs. solid gold border), silver coloring, and lighter blues.
- For competitive smokers, the opposite seems true. These smokers are looking for a richer, stronger tasting, light cigarette. Thus, darker colors, solid borders, thicker lines, and bolder print work best to convey these feelings.

Promotional Pack

- The hologram on the promotional pack is appealing and consistent with the vacation theme of Parliament advertising. The low price is also well liked by all smokers. This good value for the money is very motivating for trial.

Sturdier Packaging with Rounded Corners

- The sturdier package elicits favorable reactions. Respondents recognize the benefits of a pack that will not crush as easily. In addition, the rounded corners are also well liked. They contribute to a better hand fit and one that will not scratch or stick. However, it is unclear as to whether consumers would be willing to pay extra for these two benefits.

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Detailed Findings

Imagery

Among Parliament smokers, the primary unaided association with the brand is "Blue" and "Light". The blue color of the packaging and the blue and white theme of the advertising (background color, water and sky) help to convey this message. For the competitive smoker, the light imagery derives from the actual smoking experience, which is perceived to be light, sometimes too light, for this segment.

"All the ads I've seen, they're standing near blue water. The sky is blue and white." (P)

"Parliament is light. I don't think of it as dirty, like Marlboro." (P)

"It's too light. I don't like the way it tastes. You have to pull in hard to get anything." (C)

"I think of smoking air." (C)

Unaided secondary associations among Parliament smokers include: "Soft", "Cool", "Refreshing", "Satisfying", and "Fun".

"Parliament is refreshing and cool. The man behind the big white house with the pool." (P)

Unlike the "Marlboro Man", there is no person that immediately comes to mind as the Parliament smoker for either the Parliament or the competitive smoker. Among the Parliament smokers, there is some feeling that the smoker is a more upscale, white collar, young adult, driving a Lexus/BMW/Corvette.

"Parliament is fun, young, elegant and owns a BMW." (P)

"The lifestyle is clean cut, ain't poor, drive a Beemer, Corvette, preppy, Club Med." (P)

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Associations among competitive smokers are, for the most part, limited to the people they know who have smoked the brand-- young adults who are just starting to smoke or older, long term smokers. For those who are able to extend their associations beyond people they know, imagery of Parliament tends to be consistent with the advertising - a quality, relaxing, cigarette for an upscale smoker.

"It's an older cigarette. My mom started with Parliament." (C)

"The name implies expensive, like Charles and Diana. (C)

"The Scarsdale lady who goes to the country club and drives a Volvo or a station wagon." (C)

"I remember water with a white building, a beach. It's an airy, clean image of yuppies on vacation, relaxing." (C)

When prompted with examples of Parliament ads, all these smokers, regardless of brand, understand the fantasy, vacation ("Wish I was there"), upscale, relaxing message. The blue and white colors used again drive home the soft, cool, light taste of the cigarette and set a calm, peaceful, relaxing mood. The vacation settings work in tandem with the colors to convey a peaceful, relaxing, upscale feeling. The couple in the advertising is consistent with their vision of the Parliament smoker as an affluent, male or female young adult.

"They're psychologically trying to relate the cigarette with a relaxing atmosphere. Something that's comfortable. The blue and white are soft, cool colors." (P)

"The smoker is a guy or a girl, laid back, chillin', living it up in the lap of luxury." (P)

"I think of the ocean, cool, refreshing (from the water), blue equals cool." (P)

"It's a cool, relaxing cigarette that you smoke on vacation." (C)

"It's Models, Inc. -- well off, upper middle class that drive a Lexus." (C)

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Packaging Options

AMONG PARLIAMENT SMOKERS

Six options emerge as meriting further consideration. All seem to fit with the Parliament imagery.

"S", "X" and "Y"

Within the traditional designs, these three options elicit the most favorable response among the Parliament smoker.

The blue colors used in these packages are felt to be lighter, brighter and more eye catching. They appear to best match the blues used in the Parliament advertising and best convey the lightness of a Parliament cigarette.

"S, Y, and X are much lighter. Lighter is Parliament. Y looks like the pack they have now and I like the blues in S and X." (P)

"X is outgoing. It fits better with the advertising because it's lighter colored." (P)

"S and X fit with Parliament. The colors do it. They're sophisticated, but simple." (P)

Respondents often played with the colors on these three packages in an attempt to optimize the color combination. They mixed and matched the lighter blues on the tops of the packages with the darker blues on the bottom of others, based on personal preference.

"I like the lighter blue on Y with the lighter blue on the bottom of X." (P)

"X and S are brighter and more eye catching. I don't like the purple on the bottom of X. The [darker] blue on S is better." (P)

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All the other offerings in the traditional line are considered to be too dark for Parliament. They do not fit as well with the Parliament image and create an older, more masculine image. In addition, the dark(er) colors move the smoking experience away from the light, refreshing associations these smokers have with the brand.

"U, T, V, Z and W are very dark. They don't look good. They're more masculine and it's not a light cigarette." (P)

"W, V, U, T and Z are too dark and don't say Parliament. They don't go with the ads. They're too dark." (P)

"W, V, U, Z and T are all dark and seem old." (P)

"R"

R is the option that elicits the most consistent positive reactions among males and females in both age groups. The silver color seems to enhance the aesthetic appeal and the quality image of the Brand. The silver also makes this different from other packaging. The colors on this design are appropriate, particularly the blue shading in the upper triangle. This design fits well with the Parliament image because it conveys the blue of the water and the lightness of the smoking experience.

"I like the silver. It's a nice change and the shading is better." (P)

"R fits best. It's light and fits with the cigarettes." (P)

"I like R best. It's got a nice silver, platinum look. I like it better with the blue than the gold. It gives it a sleeker look. It says a light and airy smoke because of the colors." (P)

"The shading on this is nice. It's sparkly and shiny, bright and eye-catching." (P)

When probed, there is some consensus that the pack could be improved by incorporating the larger script of the "lights" copy.

"I like the R. It doesn't change my image. I see 'Lights' are smaller. The 'Lights' on O is better." (P)

"I like the silver, but it needs 'lights' bigger. It makes the pack look pretty, but makes you know it's light." (P)

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"O" (the same design but with gold accents), although acceptable, is not as well received as its silver counterpart. The gold does not seem to blend as well with the blue and white colors on the pack, makes the cigarette taste seem heavier and stronger and is less contemporary in feel.

"You're taking something away with O. It looks older and dated." (P)

"The taste of O would be harsher because of the darker colors." (P)

"O looks the same as everyone else. Everyone has the gold." (P)

"The R looks more wealthier. Gold doesn't go as well as silver with blue and white. The silver image is cleaner and highlights it." (P)

"G" and "H"

The revolutionary design of the "G" package is well received by all the Parliament smokers, except the older males aged 25-34.

The color is particularly appealing. Despite its difference from the current pack, most think it fits with the advertising as it conveys the color of sea water. In addition, it incorporates a wave design which is associated with the movement of ocean water and/or "smoke drifting".

"G is best. It's like the color of the water we saw in the ads." (P)

"It reminds me of a light breeze and it reminds me of a wave on the beach." (P)

"G is nice. It reminds me of the Caribbean, like you're in the ocean." (P)

"I like the way they flow. The smoke, the clouds the shadows." (P)

G creates a relaxing feeling that is consistent with the cool, light refreshing smoke of Parliament. It retains an upscale smoker profile while generating a more modern image for the brand.

"It fits the image. It's cool, refreshing and relaxing." (P)

"G reminds me of a princess, with all the jewelry... an upscale business woman on a vacation." (P)

"G looks more modern" (P)

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The "H" pack design evokes many of the same positive responses as its "G" counterpart. Respondents like the modern design and again associate the wave and color shading with the relaxing, vacation, ocean theme of current blue Parliament advertising.

When compared to the lighter color of "G", reactions to the darker blue color of H are less positive. The blue color of this design, although closer to the current pack, is more often associated with a stronger/too strong cigarette and an older, male smoker.

"G is similar to H. I choose the lighter one. H looks stronger because of the darker colors." (P)

"The color is more male. It's darker and more masculine." (P)

"The darker colors of H are more for a male and stronger. Aqua is more for a female and lighter." (P)

Regardless of design, when probed, respondents say they would prefer that the Parliament font on these designs be replaced with the writing found on the current pack. It is bolder, more elegant and easier to read.

AMONG COMPETITIVE SMOKERS

"G" and "H"

Of all the sixteen designs shown, both traditional and non-traditional, only these two options generate any excitement among this segment.

Both the G and H designs contemporize the brand and make it more enticing for smokers of competitive brands. This different look suggests that the cigarette, itself, may have changed.

"G and H are more modern. They are more for you." (C)

"I might buy this. If they change the outside, maybe they changed the cigarette." (C)

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They particularly like the swirl pattern and the absence of a line which separates the colors on the other packs. The swirl is reminiscent of water, waves and the sky and is very appealing and high tech.

"I like H. It doesn't have the line in it. I like the swirl. It looks like waves and the sky." (C)

"It's a painting and not an emblem. It's psychedelic. It catches the eye." (C)

"I like the wave and the fact that there is no line separating. The split takes away from it." (C)

Because of its darker color, "H" is preferable to "G" among this segment. They feel that the darker color of "H" moves the cigarette in the direction of the full(er) flavored light cigarettes they are currently smoking.

"The darker color says it might be stronger." (C)

"I like the navy better than the green. It's more of a cigarette. It reminds me of a European cigarette or an English cigarette." (C)

"H is the color of the sky and the ocean. The current tells me nothing. I would probably try it. You gotta try something new." (C)

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Design Elements

Color

When selecting colors among the options shown, lighter blues seem to work best for the Parliament smoker. The lighter colors keep perceptions of the cigarette consistent with its light smoke and appear to best fit with the blue of the advertising and its upscale, young adult audience. The darker blues seem to be less appropriate for this segment. The darker colors move the cigarette away from the light category and toward a heavier, stronger, higher tar smoke for an older, old-fashioned, masculine smoker.

"Dark colors look more like a full-flavored cigarette." (P)

"Lighter colors are more refreshing. It makes them seem more like a light cigarette." (P)

"Darker colors are more old fashioned; lighter colors are modern." (P)

"Lighter colors are lighter and smoother." (P)

For the competitive smoker, the opposite is true. The darker the color the more suited it is for the pack. These darker colors intensify and strengthen the perception of the smoking experience. They also enhance the quality image, making the pack look richer and more sophisticated.

"Darker color blues look like an important cigarette." (C)

"The darker colors look richer and are more effective if you want a ritzy, more sophisticated cigarette. Lighter blue is younger." (C)

"I like the darker colors. Its says a stronger tasting cigarette. It will get me to buy it because it has more flavor." (C)

Crown/Crest

Respondents are unanimous in agreeing that the crest evokes perceptions of quality, royalty, and heritage.

"The symbol makes it classy. It's kind of royal, like a crest." (P)

"The crown suggests quality." (P)

"I like the crown. It's regal looking." (C)

"The crown is a hood ornament. It's cool and classy and found on a Rolls Royce." (C)

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The red dot, although not always salient, enhances quality perceptions for the Parliament smoker. It adds to the feelings of royalty and, for some, is the jewel in the crown. Even when not associated with royalty, the red dot is described as eye catching and helpful in identifying the "P" of Parliament. Although this symbol has less meaning for the smoker of competitive brands, it still contributes to the eye appeal of the package.

"The red is nice. It's like a crown, a jewel." (P)

"It looks like it's 'P' for Parliament." (P)

"Red makes it classier looking and more eye-catching." (C)

"The red is better. It stands out and has a little personality." (C)

Solid vs. Floating Border

Differences in the border treatments generally go unnoticed. When probed, the floating border in gold is preferable to the Parliament smoker and the solid border is preferable to the competitive smoker. Parliament smokers like the lighter feeling generated by the floating border and think it is more synergistic with the "light" Parliament image. The competitive smoker describes the solid border as more prominent and easier to see.

"I like it without the solid line. The solid line looks heavier; the floating line looks lighter." (P)

"The floating border was more feminine and creates more space. It gives you a lighter feeling. The solid border is stronger and stands out better." (P)

"I like the wider, filled in frame. Thicker is good. The other is too subliminal." (C)

"Thinner is more refined, but thicker is easier to see." (C)

Width of Transversal White Line

For the most part, the differences in line width are too subtle for respondents to comment upon unaided. When shown that one is wider than the other, there is no consensus. Some think that the wider white line creates more of an airy, light feeling; others feel that the thinner white line is less intrusive. In either case, the choice that best correlates with the lighter smoking

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experience is the most appropriate for the Parliament smoker. The competitive smoker prefers no line at all, in keeping with their preference for the "G" and "H" packaging options.

"The thicker line looks lighter because there's more white." (P)

"The thinner line is a thinner cigarette. It seems easier and smoother than a thicker line." (P)

"Thicker, thinner, it's irrelevant. I prefer neither, but if I have to choose I take the thinner because there's less separation." (C)

Gold vs. Silver

Regardless of brand smoked, both gold and silver elicit quality cues. In the context of cigarette packaging, silver connotes a lighter taste and is preferable to the Parliament smoker. Gold signifies a richer, stronger experience and is the color of choice for the competitive smoker.

"I like the silver. It makes the pack look pretty and makes you know it's light." (P)

"Gold is richer taste. Silver is lighter and smoother." (P)

"Silver lends itself to a more cool, refreshing taste and blends a little more with the advertising. Silver is more refreshing, but gold is more upscale." (C)

Print Size

Parliament smokers mention that bigger is better with respect to the "Lights" copy. They believe that this will help them to identify the kind of cigarette they are buying and reinforce that Parliament is a low(er) tar cigarette. In direct contrast, the competitive smoker wants "Lights" to be subtle. This is consistent with their desire for a stronger tasting, light cigarette.

Parliament Font

For the most part, font differences go unnoticed. When directly asked, respondents tend to prefer the current lettering on the pack as it is somewhat fancier and makes the Parliament name more impactful.

"The font is more regal - fancy." (P)

"I like the highlighting around the name. It's bolder." (P)

"I like the gold highlighting around the lettering. It stands out better." (C)

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Other Findings

Promotional pack

The palm tree hologram on the promotional pack is well received among all the respondents, with the exception of the 25-34 year old male Parliament smokers. When it was shown, many spontaneous positive comments were heard, even before the discussion began. They recognize that the picture is a hologram, which is something that is unique and attractive. The palm tree puts them in the vacation spots demonstrated in the ads.

"I'd buy these just to have them because it looks nice." (P)

"It says resort, carefree people who have money and can take vacations." (P)

"This is cool and fun." (C)

"The palm tree makes you think you're on a desert island." (C)

While the 25-34 year old male Parliament smokers agree that this is a nice design, they do not see themselves carrying the pack. It does not convey to them the sophisticated image that they have of Parliament.

Regardless of response to the hologram, these respondents are unanimous in their appreciation of the lowered price of this promotional pack. Getting 14 cigarettes for \$1 is an enticing prospect. It prompts many to volunteer that they would be interested in buying Parliament.

"I like the price. It would save me a lot of money." (P)

"It's better than \$2 something a pack." (P)

"What a good deal. I'll buy them." (C)

Sturdier Packaging with Rounded Corners

Respondents were given an empty Parliament box constructed with a heavier paper and designed with rounded corners.

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After being asked to feel the box, many of these smokers recognize that the paper is heavier. They believe the sturdier construction will better protect their cigarettes from crushing. Although they recognize the benefit of a box of this type, they do not seem willing to pay more money to get this kind of box.

"This cardboard is better. I can carry it in my back pocket and it won't bend as flat." (P)

"Wow. This is truly space age. It's hard, truly crush-proof." (C))

The rounded corners are also viewed as beneficial, as they result in a package that fits better in the hand and pocket. In addition, the rounded corners seem to create a more modern looking pack.

"Everything is more round. It really wouldn't matter, but you wouldn't scratch yourself as easy." (P)

"The rounded corner give it a better fit in your pocket and if you roll it up your sleeve." (P)

"The rounded corners look nice. It fits easier in your hand and you wouldn't stick yourself." (C)

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